

Bradford prayer book, 1710.

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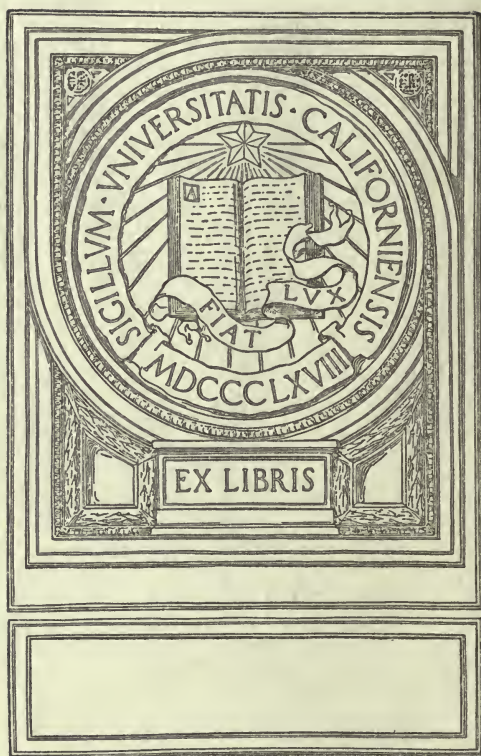
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THE

**B**RADFORD **P**RAYER **B**OOK.

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## OF

“The Book of Common Prayer,”

PRINTED A. D. 1710,

BY

WILLIAM BRADFORD,

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

TRINITY CHURCH, NEW YORK.

The first edition of that book ever printed on the American Continent.

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR

HORATIO GATES JONES.

1870.

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TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
CONGRESS



# The First American "Book of Common Prayer."

[From the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, July 15, 1870.]



THE LOVERS of early and rare American books, and especially such of them as belong to the Protestant Episcopal Church, have recently had a gratification by the discovery of a copy of the *first edition* of the "Book of Common Prayer" ever printed on this continent.

The fact that an edition of the volume had been printed by William Bradford, the first printer of the Middle States and an early vestryman of Trinity Church, New York, somewhere between the years 1704 and 1714 was noted by Mr. John William Wallace in his admirable address before the Historical Society of New York, on the occasion of the bicentenary celebration of Bradford's birth, in New York, on the 20th of May, 1863, by Trinity Church and the Historical Society just named. But the evidence of the publication rested wholly on early records of Trinity Church which Mr. Wallace had

been allowed to inspect. No copy of the book could then be found in New York, nor was there any evidence that any had ever been seen, and Mr. Wallace, in his printed address, stated that he was quite unable to say whether or not “any copy of this *Editio princeps Americana* of a book which now covers the continent in numberless forms, has survived its century and sixty years.” In fact, numerous persons doubted whether at that early day the book had ever actually appeared. But behold! in 1870 a copy turns up in Philadelphia! Mr. John Jordan, Jr., an indefatigable and very liberal member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, getting certain intimations, discovers in some old library the precious volume, which, as names in it show, belonged a hundred and fifty years ago to some of the parishioners of Christ Church, in this city. Of so curious a volume—one which stands at the head of the immense line of issue of “Prayer Books” which has since been proceeding from the American press—every particular will prove interesting to bibliographers and ecclesiologists of the Episcopal Church, and we have procured from Mr. Horatio Gates Jones, well known for his interest in our early literature, a correspondence between himself and Mr. Wallace, the



President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, to which the Bradford Prayer Book now belongs. The correspondence, we have no doubt, will prove a valuable record.

THE NORTH AMERICAN AND UNITED STATES GAZETTE, speaking of this volume, justly says that "the early date at which this book was printed—1710, and the fact that the English Book of Common Prayer was never, so far as we know, printed on this continent during the colonial term afterward, speaks highly of Bradford's enterprise."

The correspondence referred to, is as follows:

*Roxborough, Philadelphia, July 9, 1870.*

HON. JOHN WILLIAM WALLACE,

*President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.*

DEAR SIR:

Numerous inquiries have been made about "the first Prayer Book" which Mr. Jordan recently gave to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Some notices of it have appeared in the New York papers, where the book was sent for exhibition, but I do not know how accurate they are. I see that you presided at the last meeting of our Society, when the donation of the book was made. I shall be much obliged, if your leisure allows, if you would write something that I can use as a record of

that precious volume, bibliologically and typographically alike.

I well remember that when the Bradford Prayer Book was spoken of by yourself in your address at the splendid celebration in New York a few years since, when Trinity Church erected a new monument to WILLIAM BRADFORD, the first printer of the Middle States, many of the New York *bibliophiles* argued that the absence of any such volume from the library of the opulent "Bradford Club" was a very strong evidence that no copy could have ever been actually issued by Mr. Bradford, although it was admitted that a publication of the volume by him had been contemplated in very early times. I dislike to disturb you in your occupations, but a brief description of this book will prove of great satisfaction to many who are interested in the early literature of our country.

I am yours most truly,

HORATIO GATES JONES.

728 Spruce St., Philadelphia, July 12, 1870.

MY DEAR SIR:

The Prayer Book about which you inquire is a copy of the identical Prayer Book of which the

origin is to be found in an early record of Trinity Church, New York, as follows:

“August 23, 1704.

“Ordered that the Church Wardens to lend Mr. Bradford £30 or £40 for six months, on security, without interest, for purchasing paper to print *Comon* Prayer Books.”

And for the return of which money the Rev. John Sharpe, D.D., Chaplain of the Queen's forces at the Fort, and, as such, an assistant minister of Trinity Church, became Bradford's security. The book is a small quarto, “Printed and sold by William Bradford, in New York, in 1710,” an exact reprint of the English “Book of Common Prayer (of 1661) and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England; together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David. Pointed as they are to be sung or said in churches.” Facing the title page are the royal arms of Great Britain, and following it, prefatory to the body of the book, are twenty-three pages, containing “Rules for the more devout behaviour in the time of divine service in the Church of England; with some explanations of the Common Prayer.” The volume contains the (then) “New

version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the tunes used in churches, by N. Tate and N. Brady." There is nothing special to note in the *matter* of the book, which is the exact English Book of Common Prayer, &c., of Charles II.'s day.

*Typographically*, different parts of the volume have different characteristics. The Prayer Book part has obviously been printed at a different time from the part having the "new version of the Psalms." This is obvious from the fact that in the Prayer Book part continuous subjects are in letter of two different sizes; one part in small pica and the rest in bourgeois. The Offertory appears in this way, and so sometimes does the same Psalm, all showing plainly enough that the founts were small when this part was printed. The whole of the "new version of the Psalms," on the other hand, is in one letter—small pica; and small pica, I should say, of a somewhat different face from that used in the body of the book—more round, showing that when this part was printed the founts had been increased. The paging of this part begins, too, anew, making seventy-nine pages of its own; and the paper of this part is different from that in the Prayer Book part; made out of

better rags, finer and more tough; sized also, and, I should say, of less weight. Whether or not Bradford ever printed the Prayer Book with the old metre Psalms I can not determine, but I think it plain that he printed this "new version" of the Psalms, as Tate & Brady's was then called, *after* the other part of the book was done, and in a volume or tract by itself; doing this doubtless for the use of persons who had old editions of the Prayer Book alone, and in which nothing but the old versions of the Psalms were contained. His Christianity, in this respect, was greater than his craft, and it is not surprising that he lost money by his benevolent course, although Trinity Church made the loss lighter to him by generously condoning his debt to them. The book looks at first, to a person accustomed to the type of this day, as though it was *leaded*. But by looking at words where long letters, such as *f* and *y* or *l* come near each other on two lines, their ends are so near to touching that you discover that what gives the impression of the *leading* is due to the type having been cast with a long shoulder. The composition in the main is fair, though the division of the words is sometimes peculiar—different at least from what we make in this day, when we should space



out and drive the syllables into a new line. The press-work is very creditable; the color, even; in some parts first-rate, though there are occasional light places. The calendar, in the beginning of the book, has some of the peculiarities universal in all "rule and figure work" of that day. It is made up with short rule; making, of course, such work as now would be supposed to be made up with "odds and ends" of rule. In some places the rules lie low and are scarcely seen. In this part of the volume, also, the type seems worn, and the balls were apparently hard. The ink, at least, is imperfectly distributed. The main part of the book is much better. Altogether, considering the early day when the work was done, it was a great one; and comparing it with publications, long subsequent but still early, the Prayer Book of 1710 must be called very creditable to the typographer's art in the colonies.

I am, with great regard,

Most respectfully yours,

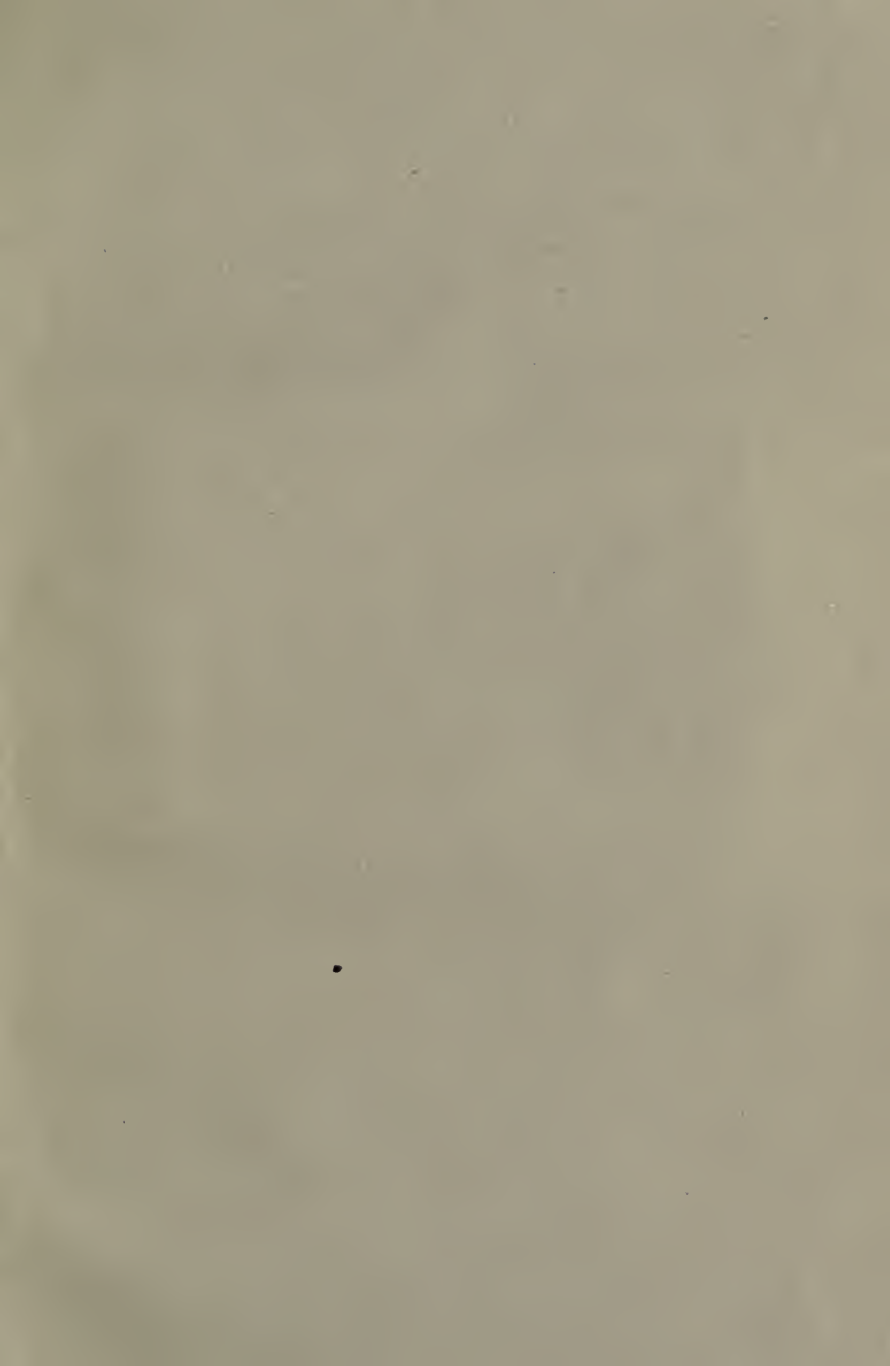
JOHN WILLIAM WALLACE.

HORATIO GATES JONES, ESQ.











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